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Istook Introduces Amendment Protecting Both Balanced Budget and Social Security

Washington, D.C. -- Today, Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK) introduced an amendment to the Constitution, H.J. Res. 53, the Balanced Budget Act of 1999, which would require Congress to balance the budget every year without using the Social Security surplus.

The measure would require 3/5ths approval of both houses of Congress in order for the federal government to spend more in a fiscal year than it receives.-

“Last year, the federal budget was balanced for the first time in forty years, but only because we had a Social Security surplus to do so,” said Istook. **“Many years ago, we made a promise to the American people to keep Social Security money in a special trust fund. Congress has been raiding that trust fund ever since. This amendment would force all future Congresses to live within their budget and keep their promise to the American people to protect Social Security.”**

In 1995, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution, but the measure twice failed in the Senate by a single vote. **“No ordinary law can restrain Congress, because Congress has the power to remove that safeguard whenever it wishes,”** said Istook. **“For years, the government has been raiding the Social Security Trust Fund. It’s wrong, and it’s time to stop it.”**

Istook’s bill has twenty-six original cosponsors.